



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **State Land Board Approves \$92,000 for Dinosaur Museum**

(HELENA) – Today the State Land Board unanimously approved the purchase of property in Malta which will be the site of the “Great Plains Dinosaur Museum”.

The 2005 Legislature appropriated \$500,000 to the Montana Department of Commerce for the proposed museum. The Land Board’s approval will allow Commerce to spend \$92,000 to purchase land immediately west of the existing Philips County Historical Museum, on U.S. Highway 2.

Land Board Chair, Governor Brian Schweitzer says this dinosaur museum is an educational investment, promoting science and math for Montana students. “To a kid, dinosaurs are greatest attraction to studying science and math,” said Governor Schweitzer. “Kids love learning about dinosaurs, and they open the doors to science and math. I don’t care how we get kids in that door, as long as we get them in.”

The new museum will be featured as a major stop on the “Montana Dinosaur Trail,” promoted by the Department of Commerce. The trail provides a circular tour of the state, with stops at 15 major museums, exhibits and dig sites east of the Continental Divide

Department of Commerce Director Anthony Preite says the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum will boost tourism and the economy of the Hi-Line. “We couldn’t have a better location for this museum,” said Preite. “Building the museum next to the existing historical society creates a cultural destination on Montana’s Hi-Line. We have world class fossils up there, and now the world has another reason to check us out.”

Six years ago, discovery of a fossilized “Brachylophosaurus” or duck-billed dinosaur in Malta, created a buzz in the international science community. The 77-million-year-old specimen named “Leonardo” was so well preserved that it contained skin, soft tissue and

fossilized pollen. Leonardo is now considered the world's best preserved dinosaur and has been featured in articles around the world.

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